

WRITTEN COMMENTS

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Jim Donnelly, Forest Fires and Air Pollution, (July 29, 2009)

Comment 1	<p>We work and live in Lassen County. In our county the population is low and the forests are plentiful. We are one of the few places in the state that meet Federal Standards for Air Pollution.</p> <p>We have too many restrictions on the harvesting and management of forests. Efforts made by industry, local politicians and citizens have been hampered by laws, regulations and outsiders opinions. There are too many amateur environmentalist making decisions that are causing environmental harm. Last August our county air board passed a resolution requesting the proper maintenance of the forest lands to preserve the forests and the air. Last summers forest fires left smoke all through the state for a month. Unless we manage our forests and let the experts do their jobs forest fires will cause pollution in Sacramento as well as the rest of the state far worse than cars or factories ever could.</p>
Response 1	<p>Thank you for your comment. We agree that effective management of forest lands is vital to preventing and containing wildfires which may lead to poor air quality.</p> <p>The California Air Resources Board has met and worked with federal land management agencies, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the local air districts to develop a " Wildland Fire Use Coordination and Communication Protocol" (Protocol) in July of 2004. Wildland Fire Use (WFU) fires are naturally ignited wildland fires that land management agencies manage for resource benefit. This Protocol provides an agreed upon framework through which the land management agencies and the air districts can minimize smoke and emission impacts of wild fires and manage the lands for resource benefit.</p>

James Collins, County of Sacramento, Fleet Services (July 29, 2009)

Comment 2	<p>The only comment or question I have to make, were these 2008 fires in California really exceptional events? Or did the California EPA, CARB, and local AQMD's fail to properly manage California forests, open spaces, and private properties leading to fires that were difficult to control and burned more fuel than necessary, leading to greater air contamination and potential harm to human health? I guess my concern is, "was the prevention of these fires reasonably controllable and preventable through proactive management?" If so, than possibly these were not exceptional events, but rather man made events due to government's failure to adequately protect its constituents. Climate change is a generally accepted theory where the expected outcomes will be hotter drier climates and other weather pattern changes possibly not unlike those experienced in 2008. Do we just accept that the state is going to burn to the ground or do we do something about reducing the risk of fires and their potential for air pollution?</p> <p>These are my thoughts because my staff had to work outdoors during these poor air quality events. They were not able to relax indoors in cool air conditioned comfort, rather they made certain the County's refuse collection equipment and trucks, underground waste water collection system equipment and highways and bridges vehicles were up and running to serve the constituents of Sacramento County. And I am certain there was a lot more industry in the Sacramento region that also had to work outdoors though these unhealthy events too.</p> <p>I have no argument that these fires were the cause of ozone air pollution. Again, my concern is that the high levels of ozone air pollution were a result of the failure to properly manage our states resources.</p>
Response 2	<p>The statewide fires that occurred during June 23, 2008 through July 26, 2008 were due to numerous lightening strikes that occurred throughout the state. Lightening strikes are unpredictable, which makes them highly uncontrollable, and naturally occurring, therefore qualifying as an exceptional event.</p> <p>The California Air Resources Board has met and worked with federal land management agencies, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the local air districts to develop a " Wildland Fire Use Coordination and Communication Protocol" (Protocol) in July of 2004. Wildland Fire Use (WFU) fires are naturally ignited wildland fires that land management agencies manage for resource benefit. This Protocol provides an agreed upon framework through which the land management agencies and the air districts can minimize smoke and emission impacts of wild fires and manage the lands for resource benefit.</p>